

Three Count®

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Flair wins WWF title, Justice makes Hogan tumble at Royal Rumble

By ALEX MARVEZ
Three Count Editor

Ric Flair joined "Nature Boy" Buddy Rodgers Jan. 19 as the only two wrestlers to have ever held both the World Wrestling Federation and National Wrestling Alliance titles by winning the vacant WWF title at the Royal Rumble pay-per-view show event.

The show, which by most early accounts has drawn a 2.0 buy rate from a potential universe of 17 million homes (340,000 orders at \$24.95 each), was highlighted by the first signs of a Hulk Hogan-Sid Justice feud and Roddy Piper capturing his first WWF title in his seven-year stay, defeating The Mountie for the Intercontinental title.

Match results and analysis:

1. The New Foundation (Owen Hart and Jim Neidhart) defeated The Orient Express (Pat Tanaka and Paul "Kato" Diamond) in a very solid 20-minute opener. Both physiques of the members of The Express have shrunk considerably since their days as full-time WWF employees. Tanaka, who currently operates a wrestling school in Tampa, even wore a full black karate outfit.

2. Piper defeated The Mountie for the Intercontinental title with use of the sleeper hold. While this match was decent, the best action took place outside the ring earlier in the week. Bret Hart, who was scheduled to drop the title to The Mountie at the Rumble, instead dropped the title two days earlier at a house show in Springfield, Mass.

As I understand the story, Hart's brother, Bruce, writes a weekly wrestling column in *The Calgary Sun* under Bret's by-line, with Bret doing the artwork for the column. WWF owner Vince McMahon reportedly asked Bret to remove his name from the column, which he refused to do. As punishment, Hart was forced to do the job two days early. This was explained to the WWF audience as Hart valiantly fighting a 104-degree fever to fight The Mountie because he didn't want to let down his loyal fans. The match was not taped for television, which is the first WWF title switch that wasn't taped since prior to the WWF's nation-wide expansion in 1983.

Three Count has learned Hart and fellow WWF performers Marty Jannetty and Shane Douglas will join

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World Championship Wrestling in May, as 18-month negotiations between Hart and the company were finally settled. Many other WWF stars have made noises about returning, especially The Legion of Doom, but no other agreements have been reached.

3. The Beverly Brothers, accompanied by The Genius, defeated The Bushwhackers in an early candidate for worst match of the year. Simply awful. After the match, Jamison, the nerd-like character that McMahon has stuck down fans' throats similar to The Gobbledy Gooker, kicked Genius in the shin. Wow.

4. The Natural Disasters defeated The Legion of Doom via a convincing countout. This should lead to a rematch at Wrestlemania VIII between the two teams with the disqualification and countout rules waived.

5. Flair won the Royal Rumble, eliminating Justice after a 62-minute stay in the ring. This was an excellent match, and different from Rumbles of the past two years. Both babies and heels fought openly among themselves, with everyone going after Flair (the match's third participant) upon their introduction. The match never dragged, and the mix of competitors involved was good. Both The Undertaker and Piper, who many considered a favorite to reach the final, were eliminated well before the match's conclusion.

The final four participants were Justice, Flair, Hogan and Randy Savage, who was eliminated by Justice. Flair and Hogan then locked up "collar-and-elbow" trying to toss the other over the top rope. Justice picked Hogan up and dumped him over the top, while Flair managed to stay in the ring. As a shocked Hogan began screaming, Justice turned his back toward Flair. Hogan grabbed Sid's arm from the arena floor, and Flair dumped him over for the victory. After the bout, Flair's victory

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Goodhart goes under: Tri-State Wrestling folds

Squared Circle fan club, Ring Masters also close

By ALEX MARVEZ

Three Count Editor

Philadelphia-based wrestling promoter and radio personality Joel Goodhart delivered his final radio show Jan. 18, announcing his departure from the wrestling business and subsequent close of the Tri-State Wrestling Alliance.

Goodhart, appearing on WIP-AM in Philadelphia, explained financial difficulties caused him to liquidate the promotion, which had promoted cards in the Northeast on a consistent basis for more than 18 months. Goodhart's Winter Challenge III show, which was slated for Jan. 25, was consequently canceled. Goodhart's Squared Circle fan club and Ring Masters wrestling school have also fallen by the wayside. Goodhart would not return phone calls from *Three Count* for comment.

Goodhart, a former real estate agent, began in the wrestling business in the mid-1980s, appearing on the radio show as a semi-frequent guest of Carmela Panfil's on the WIP show. By 1988, Goodhart was the ring announcer for live World Championship Wrestling cards at the Philadelphia Civic Center and had become as prominent as Panfil on the WIP show. In a power play, Goodhart took over sole control of the radio program and began The Squared Circle fan club.

Goodhart's club was unique for wrestling fans, as membership gave opportunities for bus rides to pay-per-view and major wrestling shows hours away from Philadelphia, and easy access to ringside seats at both World Wrestling Federation and WCW shows. He also offered fans the chance to have lunch and ask questions with some of wrestling's top stars, like Jim Cornette, Missy Hyatt, Paul Orndorff and Nikita Koloff.

Goodhart began promoting his own shows on a semi-frequent basis by 1990, and built a cult following. In 1991, Goodhart began expanding Tri-State's talent roster, bringing in names like Eddie Gilbert, Cactus Jack, The Black Harts, Abdullah the Butcher and The Original Sheik for "dream matches" that fans don't have access to in the U.S. The most legendary feud was between Jack and Gilbert, which led to Jack getting his face caught in barbed wire during one match and getting legitimately hit across the head with a beer bottle. Goodhart also flew Takayuki Iizuka in from Tokyo to

Bumps, brunches, brawls will be missed

By PAUL HANLIN JR.

Three Count Columnist

"Do one thing, and do it better than anyone else."

-- A famous TV popcorn salesman.

Welcome to a new feature of *Three Count*: another opinion on this sports/entertainment hybrid that can thrill us and make us embarrassed to be associated with it -- sometimes both at once.

You may or may not know me from my letters in the wrestling sheets as a more informed fan of pro wrestling (and rest assured, you will not see the "S" word, as in "smart" in this column, because saying that word intimates others are dumb, and I don't consider any of you dumb). I have followed wrestling since the mid-

Paul Hanlin Jr.... View from the Northeastern Lights

1970s. It is a devotion that lasts until now, eight months before my 30th birthday, enhanced in December 1986 when the curtains were drawn back on what was a "closed" sport and that wrestling was a lot more than just what Bill Apter, Inc., told me every month. There came, surprisingly, not sadness that pro wrestling is a work, but a better appreciation of it, and the men and women who, for whatever reason, choose it to be their meal ticket. I have few hobbies except writing science fiction, watching *The Sports Writers* on TV, Debbie Gibson, Janine Turner (*Northern Exposure*) and Kate Hodge (the syndicated *Love and Curses*).

I am beholden to our big kahuna, Alex Marvez, for this opportunity. I look forward to the challenge a weekly column will provide. I hope to make you think about where the heck this sometimes God-forsaken sport is going; to make you laugh, and, maybe, get under your skin, too. I hope to enlighten you on the wonders of Japanese wrestling, though to be on the side of the Japanese these days is to invite a tongue-lashing, Lee Iacocca style. And that's just for starters.

Just before this went to press, I found out about the shocking demise of Joel Goodhart's Tri-State Wrestling Alliance. It is as shocking writing it 36 hours after the fact as it was hearing it on his radio show, which is now a memory. He said the advance for his 1/25 card in

wrestle Owen Hart last September in a Japanese-style match. Most of Goodhart's shows are remembered for the non-stop brawls around the arena, different gimmick stipulations and plenty of blood.

Goodhart, who was never known for his modesty, made noises of expanding Tri-State wrestling last October, telling Three Count he planned to promote throughout Florida and run a total of 180 shows in 1992. But those dreams began to collapse when financial realities set in. One of his December radio shows had to be canceled because of money problems. The Florida dates never came about, nor were ever scheduled. Goodhart had a falling out with his Japanese talent contact, Tokyo Joe, ending his relationship with New Japan. And the one show Goodhart thought would be a winner -- Winter Challenge III -- never could come off, despite a strong advance, for financial reasons. The show was headlined by "Nature Boy" Buddy Rodgers against "Nature Boy" Buddy Landell, which would have made Rodgers the second man to have ever wrestled in seven decades.

Letters

Dear Alex,

I enjoyed the Billy Graham/David Shults material in the Jan. 6 issue of Three Count (No. 16). By the way, you just stole one of my columnists, Paul Hanlin Jr. I can't say I blame you for going after him. He's one of the best and most informed opinion writers out there. It was a smart move on both your parts.

-- Jeff Mullins, San Jose, Calif.

AM: Jeff produces the *Pro Wrestling Sushi* newsletter on a monthly basis at \$1.50 an issue, \$2.50 for overseas subscribers. The address is P.O. Box 36189, San Jose, Calif., 95158.

Advertisements

Harry White of 1075 McCausland, St. Louis, Mo. 63117, is selling mint condition wrestling programs from the early 1980s, with the pay-off figures of the wrestlers included. Send a self-addressed stamped envelope for more information.

Desire any wrestling memorabilia? Interested in video tape of old matches or those from other parts of the country or world? Advertise here for free for subscribers only at P.O. Box 12795, Gainesville, Fla. 32604-0795. I'm also looking for results and/or analysis of matches from other arts of the country. Please send them to the above address.

Philadelphia was the largest of any TWA show (Buddy Rodgers vs. Buddy Landell on top). The debts must have truly been staggering for Goodhart to close shop so suddenly. In his farewell radio show, Goodhart said he tried to give the fans of the Delaware Valley, who were just about fed up with the shenanigans of both major groups, "the most bang for the buck." On that account, Goodhart indeed delivered. He brought us audience participation lumberjack matches, *reverse* steel cage matches (everybody brawls on the outside, and the object is to throw the guy into the cage, thus eliminating him) and countless innovative twists on the gimmick matches we're used to. He swung a deal with New Japan Pro Wrestling which brought Takayuki Iizuka to Philadelphia for a match with Owen Hart in September '91, plus Terry Gordy and Steve Williams, winners of the 1991 All Japan Pro Wrestling Cup from the group's tag-team tournament, were to wrestle fellow All Japan workers Dan Krofatt and Doug Furnas on 1/25 before the roof fell in.

This scribe's memories of Goodhart's TWA were pleasant ones. What I enjoyed most were luncheons which brought the fans and wrestling's best together. From Ric Flair himself to Bruno Sammartino, from Kevin Sullivan and Woman to Rick and Bonnie Steamboat, etc. Goodhart made every effort to make these guys accessible to folks like me. The one memory of the luncheons that stood out was a woman just starting in the business in the AWA. When it came time for me to have my picture taken with her, she insisted she sit on my lap and I was to sit in the chair. No lie. I turned on TBS at 9:05 A.M., after Joel's final radio show, and the first match I see is some stiff against Steve Austin. Then I see Austin's manager. I never thought back then I was cozying up to the future First Lady of Wrestling. Thank you, Madusa, even if it took four years to tell you so.

Some other memorable dates:

January 27, 1990: The birth of the TWA. A stretcher match between D. C. Drake and Larry Winters. Drake almost threw Winters over the second level waist-high wall and down to the floor, but Winters reversed it, Drake went over and -- SPLAT! -- a 20-foot drop straight down. This was at the 30-minute mark of the match. It was the greatest bump I've ever seen. Winters finally got Drake's measure at 41 minutes of the second greatest brawl I've ever seen live.

The first?

August 3, 1991: Eddie Gilbert vs. Cactus Jack. The match which is showing up on many wrestling publication's year-end lists as one of the five best of the year. Courtesy of Goodhart and the TWA.

I wish him the best, and I hope he knows there are a lot of us who are pulling for him. May you prosper once again -- soon.

Results

Three Count readers Washti Bajnath, Alfonso Barreiro, John Patton and I attended a World Championship Wrestling card January 16 in Jacksonville. The following is my report:

1. Richard Morton defeated Johnny B. Badd by holding onto the ropes on a rolling reverse attempt by Badd. A lot of stalling early, and not too much action thereafter. Badd has learned some new moves, like a deep fireman's carry, and has honed some others. The finish makes no sense, especially when Morton is going nowhere and Badd is supposed to be a rising star. Grade: C-.

2. Marcus Alexander Bagwell defeated Mike Thor with a fisherman suplex (i.e. The Perfect-Plex). Bagwell, who is almost a dead ringer for Beverly Hills 90210 star Luke Perry, didn't look too bad. Thor has lost about 30 pounds since last year. Grade: C.

3. El Gigante and Big Van Vader fought to a double countout. Actually, fought is too strong a word, as neither wrestler did much of anything. Highlight was the 6-2 Barreiro receiving a high-five from Gigante on the way back to the dressing room. Grade: D-.

4. Arn Anderson and Bobby Eaton captured the WCW tag-team titles by defeating Ricky Steamboat and Dustin Rhodes in a two-of-three fall match. The bout, which went about 30 minutes, was not taped for television, as WCW hopes a title change at a house show will boost extremely low attendance. The first fall lasted about 15 minutes, and ended when Steamboat (who was not the legal man in the ring) backdropped Eaton (another person who shouldn't have been in the ring) over the top rope. During the 30-second rest period, the babyfaces pounded on the Anderson and Eaton. The second fall lasted less than two minutes, with Steamboat and Rhodes dominating throughout. Rhodes caught Eaton with a blind bulldog off the ropes or the pin. The third fall was the best of all, with 10 minutes of Anderson and Eaton working over Steamboat and Rhodes. Just as Steamboat was about to make a hot tag, Larry Zbyszko runs out from the back and pulls Rhodes off the ring apron. Ten seconds later, Barry Windham comes out and begins pounding on Zbyszko, slamming his head into a propped ring announcers table. In the ring, Rhodes went for a roll up on Anderson, but the referee was not around to count the pin. As Rhodes released the hold and peered over the top rope at the referee on the arena floor, Anderson hit him with Paul E. Dangerously's phone. That was the coup de grace. Grade: A- (would have been higher, but the second fall was too short).

5. Brian Pillman defeated Tracey Smothers with a cross-body block off the top rope. This was originally scheduled as The Young Pistols vs. P.N. News and

Pillman, but Steve Armstrong was a no-show. News was there, and, unfortunately, delivered a rap before the match that did not rhyme and made no sense. The match was better, but no one cared. Grade: C+.

6. The Steiner Brothers defeated Abdullah the Butcher and Mr. Hughes when Rick Steiner jumped off the second rope and bulldogged Hughes. This wasn't a pretty wrestling match, but was definitely amusing. The Steiners were hilarious holding Abdullah in a five-minute choke hold, and Abdullah plays his gimmick so well it was believable. The post match was even better, as the Steiners chased Abdullah down the open space in the aisle, and the ringside table collapsed under Hughes as he stepped on it to leave. The Steiners proceeded to toss the table on top of a prone Hughes, along with a load of ringside chairs. Grade: B for the comedy, C for the wrestling.

7. Rick Rude defeated Sting in the return of the Dusty Rhodes screw-job finish. You know, the one that always "co-incidentally" happens when Rhodes is given free reign as match-maker. Sting accidentally clotheslines referee Pee Wee Anderson, who falls outside the ring. Sting cradles Rude as second referee Nick Patrick runs in the ring and counts a pinfall. Sting is announced as champion ... until Anderson regains his senses and disqualifies the Stinger. Yes, the awful conclusion took away from a darn good match. Rude's presence is amazing, and yet WCW cannot capitalize his potential, even with the U.S. Title. Grade: B for the wrestling, F for the finish.

Notes: The show drew 3,052 fans and \$26,200, which is a slight decrease from last time. But WCW should be thrilled, because it ran a show in Jacksonville six weeks earlier, and the WWF was in town for a rare show Jan. 5 ... Don't expect anywhere near as many fans when WCW returns Feb. 7. The main event of the seven-match show is Sting-Steamboat-Rhodes vs. Rude-Anderson-Eaton in a steel cage, but that was not announced to fans at this card ... No-shows and card substitutions galore, but no announcements of such, no signs posted outside the building and no refunds offered. Especially annoying was Windham's inactivity as a wrestler, especially when he was announced as making his comeback on the show at the last WCW Jacksonville show and on television ... WCW's idea of switching the tag-team title at a house show is fine, especially with Steamboat and Rude set to feud, but I hate the way it came off on WCW telecasts the weekend of Jan. 19. They didn't announce the city it happened in, the date, nor if photos of the bout will be aired on next weekend's show, which I feel dilutes the purpose ... Speaking of photos, my good "friend" Dennis Brent was at the show. He remembered who I

was when I went backstage after the matches. I sarcastically complemented him on the newsletter/program he is producing, and he quickly said, "It's just a newsletter," and left ... The most recent issue is just as bad as the first, with more knocks on newsletter people in the letter's page and bogus news information. Brent did have to call **The Diamond Studd's** wife and apologize after printing the Studd had taken a woman backstage in Greensboro and was fined ... There is supposed to be a major announcement about WCW's **Wrestle War '92** pay-per-view show, which is emanating from Jacksonville May 17, but no word on what.

Sean Samuels and **Sergio Matsumoto** both attended a World Wrestling Federation show Jan. 7 at the Miami Arena. The following is a combination of their reports:

1. **Marty Jannetty** d. **The Brooklyn Brawler** after a cross-body block off the second rope. Very boring. Grade: Samuels - F; Matsumoto - D.

2. **El Matador** and **Ted DiBiase** fought to a double countout. **Sensational Sherri** was wearing a silver dress with a tight mini-skirt that was very revealing. Matador hit the flying burrito on DiBiase, but Sherri draped DiBiase's leg on the bottom rope. Match then ended outside the ring. Grade: Samuels - C; Matsumoto - B.

3. **Irwin R. Shyster** d. **The Big Boss Man**. The ending came when Boss Man attempted a double axe handle off the top rope, but missed. IRS then gained the pin using the ropes for leverage. Grade: Samuels - C; Matsumoto - B.

4. **Roddy Piper** d. **Skinner** with a roll-up from behind. Skinner got early heat by calling Piper "a transvestite." Match was short and all brawling. After the match, Piper through a series of jabs that, according to Samuels, "didn't even come close to hitting Skinner." Grade: Samuels - D; Matsumoto - A.

5. **The New Foundation** d. **The Beverly Brothers** when **Jim Neidhart** pinned **Blake**. **Owen Hart** was fantastic, and this was a super match. Grade: Samuels - A; Matsumoto - B.

6. **Bret Hart** made **The Mountie** submit to the sharp shooter. Matsumoto said the work and heat was so stiff he thought the match could be a shoot. Samuels said it was fairly one-sided in Hart's favor. In either case, both gave it a grade of C.

7. **Hercules** lost to **Kerry Von Erich** after a roll-up pinfall. The heat at ringside was amazing, because all sorts of kids were screaming at Hercules. Grade: Samuels - F; Matsumoto - C.

8. **Hulk Hogan** defeated **Ric Flair** via countout (Editor's note: Because many fans across the country, including myself, have yet to see a Flair-Hogan match, a complete description of the bout is listed below. Also, because one of my sources in Miami gave me the wrong

match result, claiming Hogan had pinned Flair, I felt a longer description than normal was needed). Hogan only had about 60 percent of the crowd's support in this match. Hulk ruled most of the match, not selling Flair's eye rakes, chops or clotheslines. Flair used some chops and punches to gain an advantage, and dropped a great knee to Hogan's head to gain a two-count. Hogan made a comeback, used his famous finishing sequence and covered Flair after a leg drop. But because Hogan didn't hook the leg and made a non-chalant cover, Flair was able to put his foot on the rope. Hogan, who thought he had won (as did most of the crowd) was then distracted by "Mr. Perfect" **Curt Hennig**, allowing Flair to cheap-shot Hogan in the knee. Flair managed to secure a figure-four leg-lock for 30 seconds, and upon its release 30 seconds later, Perfect hit Hogan's knee with a chair. Flair went for the cover after hitting Hogan with brass knuckles, but Hogan kicked out and made his Superman comeback. Hogan then chased Flair and Perfect around the ring, and finally got in to beat the referee's count, winning the bout via countout. Grade: Samuels - No grade; Matsumoto - B.

Rumble

(Continued from Page 1)

celebration was largely downplayed as Hogan and Justice squared off in the center of the ring and had to be separated by the WWF's goon squad of referees and road agents. The WWF did have a nice ceremony for Flair after the Hogan-Justice fiasco, with WWF figurehead president **Jack Tunney** giving Flair the title and calling him the best in the WWF.

Notes: Early speculation has a Flair-Undertaker vs. Hogan-Justice match on the Feb. 8 Fox special. Wrestling Insiders host **Mike Tenay** said the special will be pre-taped from a WWF show at Lubbock, Tx. The Hogan-Justice split would conclude there, with a match being set up between the two for **Wrestlemania VIII**. This would leave Flair in a title defense against someone else, most likely Piper.

Overall, I really enjoyed the main event and thought the undercard was fine. However, it is really premature to be pushing a Hogan-Justice feud. Sure, Justice looks great just standing there, and he gets a great live reaction. But no one is into his gimmick, and he hasn't been able to draw money, especially if they have a match April 5 at **Wrestlemania VIII**. Given time yes, but not like this. Also, the time is ripe for a Flair-Hogan match on this pay-per-view show, because interest is beginning to wane. Flair also is not primed to feud with anyone else. Also, where does The Undertaker fit in this scenario? If he gets pushed to the middle of cards (which appears to be the plan), it is the waste of one of wrestling's greatest heels.

Spotlight on: "Nature Boy" Buddy Rodgers

Buddy Rodgers, wrestling's original "Nature Boy," has found himself back in the spotlight in recent months. Rodgers, who was the only man to ever hold both the World Wrestling Federation and National Wrestling alliance titles, had that mark placed in jeopardy last September after long-time NWA kingpin Ric Flair joined the WWF. Rodgers himself, though, was hoping to tie a record of his own. Rodgers, who resided in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, Fla., was scheduled for a comeback match against "Nature Boy" Buddy Landell Jan. 25 in Philadelphia. That would mark the seventh decade the 72-year-old Rodgers had wrestled in, tying Lou Thesz's mark set in December 1990. But that quest was temporarily put on hold Jan. 18 when Joel Goodhart, who was promoting the match, filed for bankruptcy. The following are Rodgers' thoughts on the two subjects.

AM: There had been a lot of rumors concerning your health as of late, especially claims you have been having respiratory problems. What is your status?

BR: I'm in 110 percent health. If I did respiratory problems, I wouldn't be able to work out. I'm in tremendous shape. I was going to work Saturday. I haven't been sick at all.

AM: What was the situation with the collapse of Joel Goodhart's Tri-State wrestling Alliance?

BR: I'm not going to lie. I put in 50 calls to him, and he never called me back, not even to drop dead or go to hell. I found out through people who heard his radio broadcast last Saturday that he had filed for bankruptcy. The house going into the show was a complete sell out. My own family couldn't even get tickets. He sells out, and then he files for bankruptcy. In 50 years in the business, I've had a lot of things done to me, but nothing like this. The people I've talked to can't believe what Joel has done. The least he could have done was call me and tell me to drop dead, if nothing else. Georgiann (Markopolous, editor of Wrestling Chatterbox) told me, "Buddy, you don't know how many times I called and he wouldn't answer." She and John Arezzi (Pro Wrestling Spotlight radio show host) used to sell Joel's video tapes. He never delivered, and now their stuck with a lot of angry people who bought the tapes. This is absurd. I can't believe what this guy has done.

AM: When we spoke last August, you said the only way you would return to the ring is if the circumstances were right. Obviously, Joel must have said something to entice you back.

BR: I first met Joel six years ago when Carmela Panfil got him started in the wrestling business. I hadn't seen him until I went up for John Arezzi's convention last summer, with Lou Thesz, Ric Flair, and Bruno Sammartino. To make a long story short, that's when I really got to talk with him. He asked me if I ever thought of working again, and I told him that at the right price, I would go. We thought of an idea where a match would be made between "Nature Boy" Buddy Landell and "Nature Boy" Buddy Rodgers. We decided to do it and, by golly, the joint sold out. How much more can I do? He's never had a sell out. A couple of Japanese wrestlers

were supposed to go, but Joel got notice they weren't. They cut off relations because he didn't send an airline ticket or half the money. Then he bounced a check on Steve Williams. My first time I ever worked a guest appearance, my check bounced. I told him this will never happen again. Next time he would have to send the ticket and money in advance, and I would be there. The next two times, that was the deal. No problems after that. Once we made the decision to have this show, I could see good things happening. People were calling from all over. Arezzi had two big bus loads of people coming down. Georgiann said a whole gang of people were coming from New York in cars. It was unreal. This thing had momentum.

AM: When did you find out about the show being canceled.

BR: Right after Joel's radio show at 9 a.m. I had a call right away from Bob Federico, Carmela's brother. People have called me wondering if they're stuck for tickets. He filed for bankruptcy, which doesn't actually mean they're going to collect their money back.

AM: What are your thoughts on Flair joining you as the only man to have ever held both the WWF and NWA titles?

BR: Look at how they did it. Why not let him go out and beat Hulk Hogan or The Undertaker? Don't put him in with a 30-man daisy chain. How do you give a guy the title by having him throw people over the top rope? Stop and think about it. Give the guy some dignity or something. Let him hang his hat on something he can feel proud of. I'm proud of what I did. I beat Argentina Rocca for the WWF title, Pat O'Connor for the NWA title. This with Flair is horrible. They just didn't want to let him beat anybody.

AM: Did you ever think anybody would be able to tie your mark as champion of both groups?

BR: It's hard to say. With the way the business is today, there's just not any manipulation any more. It's all helter skelter. Someone thinks of a goofy idea, and they go out and use it. They're not drawing money today. They should really be drawing hand over fist. The sport is really popular today. But what have you got to come out to? Stop and think about it. If I insult your

intelligence time and time again, how many times will you keep coming out?

Sunshine State News

WCW: The complete undercard for the February 7 show in Jacksonville has Abdullah the Butcher against Cactus Jack, Marcus Alexander Bagwell against Larry Zbyszko in a bullrope match (???), The Steiner Brothers against Mr. Hughes-Diamond Studd (who should be sufficiently recovered from his elbow surgery to remove four bone chips), Ron Simmons vs. Diamond Dallas Page, a return match between Johnny B. Badd and Richard Morton, and Big Josh vs. Terrence Taylor. WCW is also in St. Petersburg Feb. 8.

It appears WCW will have a tough sell for its May 17 pay-per-view show in Jacksonville. The group has a show scheduled for the Jacksonville Coliseum April 5 (which is Wrestlemania Sunday and will likely be changed), and the WWF is in town the first week of May. The last WWF show in Jacksonville on January 5 drew a \$77,000 gate, which is more than WCW has ever drawn in the city.

Ladies Major League Wrestling: Howard Brody's group has confirmed a March 2 date at the Fort Lauderdale War Memorial. Word has it WCW wanted to do a television taping from the same facility, but that may now be put on hold. Brody also moved the group's Feb. 29 date in Immakolee to one day earlier ... Brody is still running a 900-number with news brought to it by Three Count. The number is 1-900-420-SLAM.

Florida notes: Grumbling about a possible WCW outdoor show in Daytona Beach this May or June are true. This is typical of the WCW thought process. Their last outdoor show in Miami, a War Games at the Orange Bowl in July 1987, drew a legitimate crowd of about 17,000 people. Even though it was a War games show and the NWA was hot at the time, WCW would still draw well for an outdoor show in the market. Of course, they haven't even made an attempt to run another ... Ronnie West will likely be brought back as a WCW event coordinator within a few weeks. He was going to start a wrestling newsletter ("bigger than Dave Meltzer" is what West claimed to those close to him), but that plan was nipped in the bud.

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Editorial: Regulation needed for irresponsible groups

By ALEX MARVEZ

Three Count Editor

The most important date in the history of pro wrestling in Florida takes place January 28. No pay-per-view show is scheduled from the Sunshine State, no title changes forecast.

Instead, the state's Committee on Regulated Industry will "wrestle" with a more encompassing problem — whether the wrestling industry should be taxed and regulated. A sub-committee of the Tallahassee-based state agency will vote whether a bill that places pro wrestling under the authority of the state's boxing committee should be passed on for a vote in the Florida House of Representatives.

The bill currently proposed by state boxing committee chairman Don Hazelton has drawn considerable criticism, and for good reason. Some of the regulations should apply strictly to boxing, like clauses stipulating the number of times a wrestler can perform within 24 hours and the registration of fictitious names prior to matches. The five-percent tax also seems awfully high for smaller promotions to pay on their live shows, especially when many of them are losing money.

But the abuses inflicted by wrestling promoters on their fans and employees can no longer go unchecked. Since the bill was passed to the sub-committee in November, wrestling promotions have virtually ignored all the main ideas regulation was being discussed for.

It has become apparent the World Wrestling Federation's claims of testing for anabolic steroids and punishing offenders were a sham. One has to wonder about the gall of WWF owner Vince McMahon to know testing procedures are being discussed in Florida, and not even care enough to make his wrestlers shrink to human size.

One of the major arguments in favor of the bill was penalties against promotions who false advertise, a practice present on virtually every live show held in Florida by the two major wrestling groups. So what does World Championship Wrestling do when four of its performers are either unable to wrestle or not in attendance at the group's Jan. 16 show in Jacksonville? How about nothing. No signs, no offer of a refund, no explanation.

Another disturbing aspect is the frequent use of juicing (intentional bleeding inflicted by a razor blade) by smaller promotions. At an International Wrestling

Federation show Jan. 12 in Winter Haven, three wrestlers intentionally cut themselves to simulate the effects of fighting. There were no barriers separating the wrestlers from the ring, nor proof of an HIV-test from any wrestler who did cut themselves. In this age of AIDS, that's frightening.

Hopefully, the bill can be revamped and passed on, because it has become obvious almost all wrestling promoters cannot regulate themselves.

Editor's note: We hope to go to press next Tuesday with an analysis of the Clash of the Champions, Paul Hanlin Jr.'s latest column, another *Three Count* interview and more. The issue following that will feature a complete report from the Committee on Regulated Industry in Tallahassee and the conclusion of the two-part interview with "Dr. D" David Shults. Also, a special thanks to Wrestling Isiders host Mike Tenay for having me on his Wrestling Insiders show on Jan. 18. See y'all soon.

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